

Won-pil Kim Remembers the Early Days of the Unification Church - Part 5

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Crossing through Moongyeong Gate (in the middle of their journey south)

The southeastern part of Korea is separated from the rest of the country by a fairly high mountain range. Centuries ago, rulers built gates to fortify key passes in these mountains. The main roads go around the steeper areas, but for refugees, the safest and most direct was a very narrow and steep path through Moongyeong Gate. This was a difficult crossing even for ordinary, healthy young men, who would be dripping with sweat when they reached the top and had to sit down to rest. They would sing songs to ease their tiredness.

Mr. Pak's leg was still not completely healed, and it took us seven or eight hours to cross the mountain. Snow had fallen, and there was a layer of ice on the snow. A fresh snowfall covered the earlier snow and ice. Therefore, the path was very slippery and dangerous.

I carried the bicycle, and Father carried Mr. Pak on his back. In this way we climbed up. Several other people had been traveling by bicycle, but they discarded them on the way up. Others who had been carrying bags or rice or wagons filled with belongings also had to abandon them. Finally, we made it over the mountain.

This part of the journey was so hard for me, but I did not consider how difficult it must have been for Father as well. As I look back, I realize that I was so preoccupied with myself that I did not think of caring for Father.

In 1971, I went back to these mountains and, together with other church members, retraced Father's crossing. As we climbed it again, I could realize how difficult it must have been for him to carry Mr. Pak up and down that mountain trail.

An Eternal Connection with Father

Then we arrived in a small village, Yeongchong, where Father bought some rice cakes. "Do you know what day today is?" he asked. We replied that we did not know. "Today is the day when in front of God we made a pledge together. This is the day."

Earlier I told how I had returned, unopened, a letter Father had written to one member. Father had been keeping that letter, and when we came to this village, he brought it out and explained why he had saved it. Through this, I learned that even though this person had left the family, Father still felt concern for him. (In fact, he continues to care about all those who leave the movement.)

After offering a prayer, Father tore up the letter, and then we ate the rice cakes together. When people join, they pledge in front of God, together with Father, to do God's will. So even though they leave, Father continuously prays for them and cares for them.

Father sees them not from a horizontal or superficial point of view, but from a vertical point of view. Someone may not appear so impressive externally, but Father sees his ancestors' good accomplishments and treats them very warmly.

Suppose someone accomplished '20' degrees for the church and then leaves it, influencing it somewhat negatively, say '5' degrees. Even if we subtract the 5, still 15 remain. But if he continuously does bad, say '25' degrees, his bad accomplishments outweigh his good accomplishments; in such a case, it may be permissible to cut him off from the providence, and Satan will be unable to accuse.

But Father always believes that people will return. If he, the Messiah, cuts off a relationship with someone, there is no way he can be saved. In fact, most people who leave don't do so because of Father or the Divine Principle, but because they made some mistakes in the family, or because even though they tried hard they could not fulfill their mission. Sometimes when people who feel they are capable are not chosen for missions, they begin to feel isolated or alienated from Father, eventually leaving.

Father has said, "It is very difficult to have a connection with me, but once you have it, it is yours eternally." Father can never cut people off from himself. If we like the connection, we can keep it; if we don't like the connection, we can easily cut it. In a sense, we are happy people, because we can cut the connection; but Father cannot.



Food for the Journey

Mr. Pak was a good organizer, and he planned our daily food ration. We had to ration our food very carefully; otherwise, we would run out before reaching Busan.

We would pack a certain quantity of food for a given number of meals, but it never turned out exactly as planned. When I cooked according to his plan, there was usually not enough food for the three of us to eat three meals a day. So we always felt hungry. I didn't want Father to feel hungry, so I made more than what Mr. Pak had instructed. He didn't always watch me as I was measuring out the portions to cook. Also, when Mr. Pak saw the finished meals, he might have suspected I was serving more food than he had planned, but since he also was hungry, he never said anything to me about it.

Father knew that during our long journey, we would often be hungry and face difficulties. He also knew that seeing other people eat would make our hunger more acute. This was the first time that Mr. Pak and I had visited South Korea, so we didn't know anything about the areas we visited. When we went to cities that were known for their fruits, Father would sometimes buy some for us. He would explain how one city was famous for its apples, another for its oranges, etc., and let us sample their specialties.

Father did not have extra money to do this, but he knew our hunger and wanted to buy food for us. We worried that if Father continued buying fruit for us, his money would soon run out, but sometimes people would give him money. Refugees always need some money, yet throughout our journey, we were never totally without money.

Before arriving in Gyeongju, we exchanged the food we had brought with us for some rice. We had to trade a large quantity of supplies for a small amount of rice. That rice disappeared so quickly! Even now, I recall how hungry we were because of how quickly we ate that rice. That meal of rice is still one of my strongest memories of our journey.

Sometimes when we visited small, humble villages, the people would offer us dinner. As we received that food, I would feel very strongly that someday I would return it to them. I determined that if anyone ever came to me for food, I would treat them very warmly.

I could understand how deeply Father feels about people who offer aid to someone in difficulty. This can be applied not only to physical food but also to spiritual food. In the Pyongyang days, Father always gave guidance and spiritual food to those who were in trouble. Late at night or early in the morning, Father always gave guidance. When people come to us in difficulty and trouble, we should never let them go without giving them some spiritual food, helping them to solve the problem. When you give spiritual food to lonely people, they are very grateful and appreciative. Always treat such people warmly; never let them

go empty-handed.



Journey's End

Finally, Mr. Pak's leg was healed, and by the time we arrived in Gyeongju, the ancient capital of the Silla Dynasty, he could begin to walk even without a stick. This trip was my first opportunity to know Mr. Pak, and during our times together, I began to understand his situation, and also understand more about Father.

Mr. Pak was a quiet person and also very warm-hearted. When they were together in prison, Mr. Pak once told Father he would like to build a church building with a capacity of 300 people, where Father could preach. He asked Father if he could stay in Gyeongju and study to be a professional artist.

So only Father and I continued the journey. Our next goal was a town on the east coast named Ulsan, where there was a train station. This small country town is now a highly developed industrial city, home of one of the biggest shipyards in the world. From Ulsan, we took a train south to Busan.

The train was powered by a coal-burning steam engine. There was no room in the passenger cars, only on the engine. Behind the engine car were the operator and a fireman to keep the fire stoked. The only way we could ride was by clinging to the front of the engine. It was late January, and the wind was very cold as we hung on to the train. Our backs were against the engine, so they were warm, but our faces headed into the wind. Even though the cold air rushing past the moving train was like a knife in our flesh, we preferred it to walking.

At last we arrived at the train station in Pusan. That station is now the site of a big civic center. It was late at night and very dark, so we stayed at the station, keeping warm by making a fire in an empty butter can left by UN soldiers. The following day we went into the city.

For most refugees, the journey south took ten days to two weeks. Ours lasted nearly two months. We had left Pyongyang on December 4, 1950, and we arrived in Busan on January 27, 1951. This was the only part of the peninsula not overrun by the Red Chinese troops.

We were among the last people to leave the North and arrive safely in the South.

Rev. Kim Won-pil ascended to the heavenly realms in 2010. His legacy of gentle goodness, and appreciation of True Father's early life and work in particular, remain as a pillar of our movement.